



I Hit My Head and Everything Changed

Sunday October 6, 2019

**ESPRIT
ORCHESTRA**

**Alex Pauk
Founding Music Director
& Conductor**

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MUSIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Riveting, bursting with energy and explosive in nature, Thomas Adès' *Overture to "The Tempest"* provides the perfect opening not only for tonight's concert but for the season as a whole. It foretells something about what Esprit might be doing this season, but leaves one wondering about where things could go from here musically – a good quality to have in pieces of music as well as in concert programming. The work also gives us a chance to bring the sound of lots of musicians (more than Esprit's usual complement) to your ears. Abrahamsen's concerto similarly engages many players and exhibits a strikingly inventive sound world achieved by combining techniques both simple and extremely complex in the composer's totally original and utterly personal musical expressions. We're thrilled to have Moira Ness join us collaborating with Brian Harman to bring leading edge visual and video art into the mix of the concert in ways parallel to musical composition. A highlight moment comes with the Esprit debut of Avan Yu who is one to watch as a major force in the world of internationally acclaimed young pianists.

Of special meaning for me is being able to celebrate Alexina's receiving the Molson Prize with a performance of her *Love Songs for a Small Planet* in the context of an Esprit concert. She has, along with being important in helping found Esprit, devoted countless volunteer hours to keeping the orchestra alive as a Board member, educator and activist on behalf of composers. I'm so pleased that her own artistry, the reason for her being the 2019 Molson Prize laureate, has a place to shine in our collaboration with long-time friends, the Elmer Iseler Singers.



Alex Pauk, C.M.
Founding Music Director

I Hit My Head and Everything Changed

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

ALEX PAUK, Music Director and Conductor

Sunday October 6, 2019 | Koerner Hall

GUEST ARTISTS

Moira Ness – Artist

The Elmer Iseler Singers – Chamber Choir

Avan Yu – Piano

7:15pm Pre-Concert Talk, hosted by Alexina Louie
8:00pm Concert

PROGRAM

Thomas Adès
(England) **Overture to “The Tempest” op.22a** (2004)
for orchestra

Brian Harman
(Canada) ***I Hit My Head and Everything Changed*** (2019)**
for orchestra with video art projections by Moira Ness

INTERMISSION

**PRESENTATION OF 2019 CANADA COUNCIL MOLSON PRIZE IN THE ARTS
TO ALEXINA LOUIE**

Alexina Louie
(Canada) ***Love Songs for a Small Planet*** (1989)
for chamber choir, harp, percussion & string orchestra
Introduction: Night
I. Sun
II. Moon
III. Earth

INTERMISSION

Hans Abrahamsen ***Left, alone*** (2015)*
(Denmark) for piano (left hand) and orchestra
Part One **Part Two**
I. Very fast IV. Slowly
II. Slowly walking V. Prestissimo tempestuoso
III. Presto fluyente – VI. In a tempo from another time –
like a gentle rain,
light and bubbly In a time of slow motion –
 Suddenly in flying time,
 “Fairy Tale Time”

*Canadian Premiere

World Premiere commissioned by Esprit with generous support from **Ontario Arts Council

LOVE SONGS FOR A SMALL PLANET

Alexina Louie

Introduction: Night

Darkness of the sun, darkness of the night
Nothing but night.

—Hawaiian (Pacific)

I. Sun

The fearful night sinks
trembling into the depth
before your lightening eye
and the rapid arrows
from your fiery quiver.
With sparkling blows of light
you tear her cloak
the black cloak lined with fire
and studded with gleaming stars –
with sparkling blows of light
you tear the black cloak.

—Fang (Africa)

II. Moon

New moon, come out, give water to us,
New moon, thunder down water for us,
New moon, shake down water for us.

—Bushman (Africa)

III. Earth

It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed.
I, I am the spirit within the earth.
The feet of the earth are my feet;
The legs of the earth are my legs.
The strength of the earth is my strength;
The thoughts of the earth are my thoughts;
The voice of the earth is my voice;
The feather of the earth is my feather.
All that belongs to the earth belongs to me,
All that surrounds the earth surrounds me.
I, I am the sacred words of the earth,
It is lovely indeed, it is lovely indeed.

—Sioux (North America)

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

Alex Pauk, Music Director and Conductor

VIOLIN I

Stephen Sitarski, *concertmaster**
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Renee London
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Nancy Kershaw
Leslie Ting
Catherine Cosbey
Sharon Lee
James Aylesworth
Megan Jones

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Bethany Bergman*
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Erica Beston
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Clara Lee
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Sarah Fraser Raff
Jennifer Martyn

VIOLA

Carolyn Blackwell*
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Catherine Gray
Shannon Knights
Yosef Tamir
Woosol Cho
Rory McLeod
Paul Barna

CELLO

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Margaret Gay
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Mary-Katherine Finch
Ashton Lim
Bryan Holt

BASS

Rob Wolanski*

Natalie Kemerer

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TINGLEY

Michael Cox

Eric Lee

Calum MacLeod

Neal Evans

FLUTE

Doug Stewart*, *piccolo*

Maria Pelletier, *piccolo*

Leslie Newman, *piccolo*

OBOE

Aleh Remezau*

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JOHN STANLEY

Karen Rotenberg

CHAIR SPONSORED BY ELLEN
KARP & BILL JOHNSTON

Adam Weinmann

CLARINET

Colleen Cook*, *e-flat clarinet*

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DAVID SHERR

Richard Thomson, *bass clarinet*

Michele Verheul

BASSOON

Jerry Robinson*

William Cannaway, *contrabassoon*

Stephen Mosher

HORN

Christine Passmore*

Diane Doig

Gary Pattison

Linda Bronicheski

TRUMPET

Brendan Cassin*

Anita McAlister

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Michael Fedyshyn

TROMBONE

David Archer*

David Pell, *bass trombone*

Megan Hodge

TUBA

Jonathan Rowsell*

HARP

Sanya Eng*

PIANO

Stephen Clarke*, *celeste*

PERCUSSION

Ryan Scott*

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Mark Duggan

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Blair MacKay

Ed Reifel, *timpani*

*Denotes Principal Player

ALEX PAUK

Founding Music Director and Conductor

Alex Pauk was inducted into the Order of Canada on September 23rd, 2015. Pauk revitalized orchestral life for composers across Canada by founding Esprit Orchestra in 1983 and devoting the organization to new music. Through building and sustaining Esprit's high calibre performances, commissioning program, innovative programming (70% Canadian), recordings, outreach projects, national and international tours, and multimedia ventures, Pauk has been a leader in developing and promoting Canadian music at home and abroad.

As a conductor, he attains excellent performances on stage and in recordings. Pauk's commissioning of Canadian composers of all ages and stylistic trends is central to his work. In 2007, Pauk was a recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize, awarded to those who contribute to the cultural and intellectual heritage of Canada. Pauk's commitment to the community through Esprit has also garnered SOCAN and Chalmers Awards, as well as three Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards. Under Pauk's direction, Esprit was awarded the 2005 Vida Peene Award for excellent standards of performance and programming.

In addition to his work as a conductor, Alex Pauk has a prolific career as a composer, having written music for every kind of performing ensemble. Pauk has composed for and conducted more than sixty works for organizations such as the Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, CBC Vancouver Orchestra, New Music Concerts, Vancouver New Music Society, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and Esprit Orchestra.

Pauk graduated from the University of Toronto Faculty of Music in 1971. He currently resides in Toronto with his wife, Alexina Louie, who is his vital partner in the development of Esprit Orchestra.

STEPHEN SITARSKI

Concertmaster

Stephen Sitarski enjoys an incredibly varied career as a violinist and conductor, and has built an excellent reputation nationally in performances of Baroque music through to jazz and modern. He is also a recognized conductor, adjudicator, music administrator, and teacher. In the contemporary classical music realm, Mr. Sitarski has been on three tours of the United States with Art of Time Ensemble, the last being February 2018 with singer, songwriter, and guitarist Steven Page. He is also a regular member of Toronto New Music Concerts, Arraymusic, and Soundstreams, the last of which included a tour in May 2012 of Taiwan and China, performing works by Tan Dun and R. Murray Schafer.

As a soloist, Mr. Sitarski frequently appears with many concertos in the standard repertoire as well as concertos written especially for him by Canadian composers such as Kelly-Marie Murphy and Glenn Buhr. In April 2019, he will perform Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2* with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, where he also serves as Concertmaster. Mr. Sitarski is also Concertmaster of Esprit Orchestra, and held the same position with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS) for 15 seasons (1997 – 2012). In summer 2018, he served as Concertmaster for the orchestra performing the Mirvish Production of *The King and I*. Stephen has also been guest concertmaster across Canada and abroad.

Mr. Sitarski has also added conducting to his roster of duties, having conducted the Mississauga and Georgian Bay Symphonies. Routinely heard throughout Canada on disc and on live radio broadcasts, Sitarski has also performed countless television and film scores. Stephen has always maintained a hand at mentoring and teaching; he will mark his 15th year on a faculty of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. In recognition of this, he was previously awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal, a nomination submitted by the NYOC. In previous years, Stephen taught at Wilfrid Laurier University, the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music, and the Banff Centre for the Arts.

He is an advocate for the mental and physical health of musicians, and has given talks about the mental strain of a musician's life.

MOIRA NESS

Artist

Moira Ness is an interdisciplinary visual artist specializing in contemporary photo-based landscapes and algorithm generated text. Her current work experiments with minimalistic text-based painting. Through data mining her own personal archive, she creates confessional and romanticized text by utilizing a word organizing algorithm. The algorithm scrambles groupings of source text, repurposing the archive into new work.

Moira lives in Toronto and works out of Northern Contemporary Studios in Roncesvalles. She has exhibited extensively throughout North America and Germany including The Los Angeles Center For Digital Art, The Gladstone Hotel, Lakeshore Arts, Akasha Art Projects, Lakeshore Arts, Northern Contemporary, Gallery 44, Roman Susan Gallery, Red Head Gallery, Latcham Gallery, The Art Gallery of Mississauga, Narwhal Contemporary, OCADU, Main Street Arts, Kunstwerk Carlshütte, and The CICA Museum.

She was a finalist for both RMG Exposed 2016 and 2017, a finalist and overall winner for the 2017 UNTAPPED Emerging Artist Competition for The Artist Project and a finalist for SNAP! 2017 Photo Auction. Moira participated in the 2017 Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition where she won the Emerging Artist Award and was shortlisted for the Founding Chairman's Award. Moira participated in the 2018 Toronto Outdoor Art Fair where she won the Catherine Bratty Award for Best of Art Fair, judged by Bruce Eves. Moira showed her work at NordArt in Büdelsdorf, Germany in the summer of 2017.

In 2017, she was the artist in residence at The 108 Residency in Upstate New York and was the artist in residence at Main Street Arts in May 2018. Moira recently joined Arts Etobicoke's board of directors and gallery committee.

THE ELMER ISELER SINGERS

Chamber Choir

The Elmer Iseler Singers (EIS), conducted by artistic director Lydia Adams, enters its 41st Anniversary Season in 2019/20. This 20-voice fully-professional choral ensemble, founded by the late Dr. Elmer Iseler in 1979, has built an enviable reputation throughout Canada, the United States and internationally through concerts and recordings — performing repertoire that spans 500 years, with a focus on Canadian composers.

EIS present a five-concert series in Toronto each season, and are featured at concerts, workshops, and festivals throughout Canada. Touring is also a major component of EIS activities with national tours, east and west, bi-annually, annual provincial tours and runouts. These events often engage community singers through workshops and in concert performances.

Annually, EIS sponsors choral workshops through their *GET MUSIC!* Educational Outreach Initiative for secondary school conductors and choirs, concluding with a joint public performance. They also work with university students, to mentor young conductors, who also join us in the joint public performance.

The Elmer Iseler Singers have recorded 15 CDs featuring Canadian music. EIS with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra were 2019 Grammy nominated and 2019 JUNO awarded for the brilliant Ralph Vaughan Williams' Chandos CD recording with Peter Oundjian conducting. EIS are 2014 National Choral Award recipients and JUNO nominees for "Classical Album of the Year: Vocal or Choral Performance" for *Dark Star Requiem* with Tapestry Opera and Gryphon Trio in 2017 and for David Braid's *Corona Divinae Misericordiae* with Patricia O'Callaghan in 2019.

AVAN YU

Piano

One of Canada's most compelling young pianists, critics have praised Avan Yu for his "glittering virtuosity" (West Australian) and his "astonishing sensitivity" (La Presse). He has performed extensively throughout Europe, North America, Asia and Australia and at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Philharmonie in Berlin, Salle Cortot in Paris, and Sydney Opera House. As a sought-after guest soloist with orchestras around the world, he has performed over twenty-five different piano concertos with orchestras such as the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, Victoria Symphony, Symphony Nova Scotia, Sydney Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Dresden Philharmonic, collaborating with conductors and musicians such as Pinchas Zukerman, Rafael Fruehbeck de Burgos, Bramwell Tovey, Christian Arming, Juanjo Mena, Yo-Yo Ma, and Johannes Moser. Yu first achieved international recognition when he triumphed at the Sydney International Piano Competition, winning First Prize along with nine special awards. At age 17, he was the youngest competitor ever to win the Canadian Chopin Competition. He has also won the Silver Medal and Audience Prize at the Santander International Piano Competition.

His teachers include Horacio Gutierrez, Klaus Hellwig, Kenneth Broadway, Ralph Markham, and Kut Kau Sum. He has obtained Diplom and Konzertexamen degrees at the Berlin University of the Arts in Germany and is currently a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts at the Manhattan School of Music. While in Germany, he performed at festivals such as Rheingau Musik Festival, Heidelberger Frühling, Kissinger Sommer, and Ruhr Klavierfestival, and for the President and the Bundestag President of Germany. He has received generous support from the Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, Vancouver Women's Musical Society, and The Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation.

His recording of Liszt's piano transcriptions of Schubert's Winterreise and Schwanengesang, released by Naxos, won glowing reviews from critics at Gramophone Magazine, American Record Guide, and Fono Forum. Besides playing the piano, Avan has also written for the National Post.

PROGRAM NOTES

THOMAS ADÈS *Overture to "The Tempest"* op.22a (2004)

According to the notable critic of the New Yorker Magazine, Alex Ross - throughout the history of operatic composition there have been at least fifty attempts to set Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to music. As far as we know, most of these attempts unfortunately failed miserably, since we have not had a single operatic staple in the repertoire featuring a similar plot line, with the exception, of course, perhaps of Mozart's *Magic Flute* where scholars have tried to draw parallels between the autocratic sorcerer's magical powers and

his unruly servant. For the particular reason of the number of failed attempts to set *The Tempest*, Thomas Adès' feat becomes ever more significant. After receiving its highly successful premiere at the Royal Opera House in London conducted by the composer himself, the opera made rounds around the world firmly establishing its place in the operatic repertoire along such significant Shakespeare-based works as Verdi's *Falstaff* and *Ottelo*, as well as Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Acknowledging the importance of Adès' music, Esprit chose to give a dramatic punch to the launch of its 37th season by opening it with the overture

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from *The Tempest*. With its spiraling lines, zigzagging melodic figures and head-spinning patterns, the overture signals the arrival of the unrelenting storm sending Prospero's ship to a tumultuous wreck, at the same time echoing the upcoming plot of the opera that is just as turbulent and visceral.

Mimicking the violent throws of the ship against the waves, the orchestral lines rapidly rise into the stratospherically high notes of the piccolo to just as swiftly fall down into the rhythmically slower, contrapuntally juxtaposed figures of the low brass. The same attempt repeats almost 10 times before the overture reaches its climax that is marked by the chorus announcing the famous Shakespearean "Hell Is Empty", thus marking the arrival of Act I of the opera and consecutively Esprit's 37th season, with its equally dramatic programming.

Program note courtesy of Eugene Astapov

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BRIAN HARMAN

*I Hit My Head and Everything
Changed (2019)*

With video art projections by
Moira Ness

I Hit My Head and Everything Changed explores the distortion of borrowed original music and text/lyrics as a way of creating an artistic confessional. Moira has created a minimalistic text-based video piece that will be projected in the concert hall while Brian's music is performed. The projection merges years of personal archive and stand out lyrical references from various musical sources through a text-sorting algorithm. This particular algorithm rearranges the order of words and sentences, creating new content from the archive of Moira's writing. Brian's music combines and distorts musical quotations ranging from Bach and Chopin to Depeche Mode and Demi Lovato, playing with temporality and self-expression.

To create the visual distortions of each art piece another algorithm is used via a digital image manipulation software called Photoshop. This specific effect, "Content-Aware Fill", was originally designed to remove unwanted objects or

distracting elements from photos. Through this algorithm different areas of the photo are simultaneously sampled to create new but relevant “intelligent visual content”.

Moira has changed the source information from photographic images to simple black and white text. The Content-Aware Fill tries to make sense of the text by treating it like an image, unable to decipher letters or words. It then blends/samples and creates what it thinks is a finished photographic image. The results are the 200 or so pieces shown in the projection. The patterns created are often confusing and unintelligible, but upon closer inspection hints of method can be spotted. A deeply personal story emerges from the distorted groupings of the Content-Aware filled pieces.

Brian's music similarly distorts a wide range of musical references through various methods, including rhythmic and pacing distortions, the use of polytonality and the layering of contrasting musics. His manipulations are often inspired by the algorithms employed by Moira; for example, musical phrases are sometimes cut up and rearranged as they are manipulated, creating new content. The piece aims to exploit certain musical

elements present in the source materials, especially the brashness of rock music and the sentimentality of a pop ballad.

The five art pieces on view in the lobby are direct reproductions of pieces seen in the video projection. The one large hanging piece is all 200 video projections digitally sewn together. The 4 smaller pieces, chosen to highlight different parts of the collaborative storytelling, are also selected from the larger grouping from the projection and presented individually.

Program note courtesy of composer Brian Harman and artist Moira Ness.

ALEXINA LOUIE

Love Songs for a Small Planet (1989)

Introduction: Night

I. Sun

II. Moon

III. Earth

Love Songs For A Small Planet was Louie's first major choral composition, a work that expresses her humanitarian and environmental concerns. For several years before writing *Love Songs For A Small Planet*, Louie had been collecting inspiring poems by

Indigenous peoples of the world. The opportunity to set the poems to music was provided by a commission from the Vancouver Chamber Choir for its appearance at the International Choral Festival in Toronto. Jon Washburn conducted the premiere of the work on June 16, 1989. In October 1992, The Elmer Iseler Singers with Esprit Orchestra premiered the version with expanded orchestration incorporating a string orchestra. Of this work the composer comments:

"I came across the poetry set in *Love Songs* while I was in San Francisco perusing a friend's collection of books. I was immediately taken by their vivid imagery and was extremely moved by their powerful love of, and respect for nature. The dilemma I faced as a composer was how to set these texts in a sensitive and musical manner which would enhance the words, not detract from them or make them appear superficial. To add variety and colour to the chamber choir, harp and percussion were employed in the original version.

Sun contains the most challenging and complex writing, especially with its pointillistic effects capturing the words "sparkling light." The

second movement is a tender entreaty to the moon. Finally, in Earth, four soloists from the choir add to the rhythmic impetus of the work by blowing into glass bottles. These rhythmic sequences on bottles create a rather surprising and haunting effect. After this, the voices enter in a wordless hocket-like passage. My piece ends with a phrase which repeats several times over a static, sonorous harmony. With this ending I suggest the sense of eternity that the text implied to me."

Program note courtesy of composer Alexina Louie

HANS ABRAHAMSEN *Left, alone* (2015)

I was born with a right hand that is not fully functional, and though it never prevented me from loving playing the piano as well as I could with this physical limitation, it has obviously given me an alternative focus on the whole piano literature and has given me a close relationship with the works written for the left hand by Ravel and others. This repertoire has been with me since my youth.

My very first public performance of one of my own works was in autumn 1969. The piece was

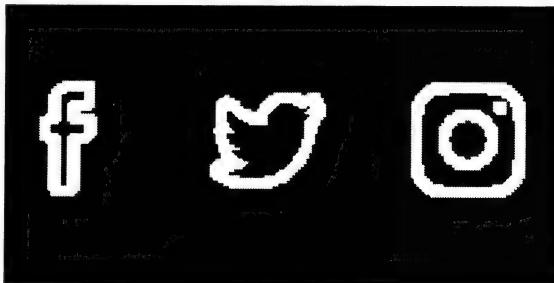
called *October* and I played the piano with my left hand and the horn, my principal instrument (the only instrument that can be played with only the left hand). Part of the piece requires the performer to play natural harmonics of the horn directly into the open strings of the grand piano to create resonance. The pedal was kept down by an assistant lying on the floor.

Through decades the idea of writing a larger work for piano left hand has been in my mind. This new work is not written for a pianist with only one hand, but rather by a composer who

can only play with the left hand. The title *Left, alone* contains all kinds of references, not only to the obvious fact that the left hand is playing alone. *Left, alone* is divided into two large parts, each consisting of three smaller movements – in effect, six in total. The work was commissioned by Westdeutscher Rundfunk, and co-commissioned by City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Rotterdam Philharmonic and written for Alexandre Tharaud.

*Program note courtesy of composer
Hans Abrahamsen*

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COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

THOMAS ADÈS

b. 1971

Born in London in 1971, Thomas Adès studied piano at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and read music at King's College, Cambridge. A prodigious composer, conductor and pianist, Adès was described by the New York Times as one of today's 'most accomplished overall musicians.'

Adès' first opera, *Powder Her Face* (1995) has been performed worldwide whilst his second, *The Tempest*, was commissioned by London's Royal Opera House and was premiered under the baton of the composer to great critical acclaim in 2004. It has since had several performances elsewhere, including the Metropolitan Opera in New York where it was recorded for a Deutsche Grammophon DVD, which subsequently won a Grammy Award. Adès's third opera, after Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, premiered at the Salzburg Festival in July 2016.

Adès's many musical advocates include Sir Simon Rattle who performed *Asyla* (1997) at his final concert

with the CBSO and his first as Music Director of the Berlin Philharmonic, and *Tevot* with the Berlin Philharmonic in 2007. In 2011, the orchestral work *Polaris* was premiered by the New World Symphony and Michael Tilson Thomas in Miami and has since been choreographed by Crystal Pite. Adès' *Totentanz* for mezzo-soprano, baritone and large orchestra was premiered at the 2013 Proms by the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Adès has won numerous awards, including the 2015 Léonie Sonning Music Prize and the prestigious Grawemeyer Award (2000), of which he is the youngest ever recipient. Adès was Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 1999 to 2008 and coaches piano and chamber music annually at the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove.

Biography courtesy of Faber Music

BRIAN HARMAN

b. 1981

Brian Harman is a composer, teacher and writer. His compositions are frequently inspired by extra-musical ideas such as technology, architecture, dance, and concepts of ritual.

In 2016, he was the recipient of the KM Hunter Artist Award for Music. His compositions *Hum* (for double sextet), *Sewing the Earthworm* (for voice and piano), *Cherry Beach* (for violin and piano) and *Inverno* (for solo piano) have recently been commercially released on the Redshift and Centredisc labels. He has collaborated extensively with artists in other disciplines, including performance artist Nina Arsenault, writer David Brock, dancer Jennifer Nichols and visual artist Danilo Ursini.

In 2013, he worked closely with Georges Aperghis at the Impuls Festival (Austria). His orchestral work *Supposed Spaces* was selected to be part of Canada's 2013 submission to World New Music Days, and in 2011 he was a winner in the ISCM International Vocal Music Competition in Vienna. Brian received his Doctor of Music from McGill University in 2012, and served as Ontario Councilor and President of the Canadian League of Composers from 2013 to 2016.

Biography courtesy of composer

ALEXINA LOUIE b. 1949

Alexina Louie is one of Canada's most highly regarded and most often performed composers. Her explorations of

Asian art and philosophy have contributed to the development of her unique musical voice. Louie's communicative and highly dramatic work pushes the boundaries of convention and tradition. Her commissioned works range across all musical genres, including ballet and opera.

She has been commissioned by Canada's leading arts organizations including The National Ballet of Canada, The Canadian Opera Company, The Montreal Symphony, The Toronto Symphony, The National Arts Centre Orchestra among many others.

Renowned soloists such as James Ehnes and Jon Kimura Parker have commissioned works from her. Louie's orchestral works have received important performances by internationally renowned conductors such as Sir Andrew Davis, Leonard Slatkin, Alexander Lazarev, Charles Dutoit, Gunther Herbig, Pinchas Zukerman, Kent Nagano, Peter Oundjian, Bramwell Tovey, and Ingo Metzmacher. Her works have been performed on major European and Asian tours by orchestras (Toronto Symphony, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra) as well as soloists and ensembles. In addition, her works are receiving recognition

in China where her music has been performed at the Beijing Modern Music Festival over three consecutive years.

Her vocal and operatic works have been sung by celebrated singers, including Barbara Hannigan, Russell Braun, Daniel Okulitch, and John Relyea. *Burnt Toast* as well as *Toothpaste*, her ground-breaking award-winning made-for-TV mini comedic operas (director Larry Weinstein, librettist Dan Redican), have been broadcast around the world. *Burnt Toast*, in competition with 147 films, won the prestigious International Golden Prague Grand Prix. Celebrated violinist

James Ehnes commissioned *Beyond Time*, a highly virtuosic, colourful work for violin and piano which he has taken on tour and performed before enthusiastic audiences. Of Ehnes' performance of the work in 2014, the Edmonton Journal wrote "*Beyond Time* confirms, if one needed any confirmation, that Alexina Louie, with her kind of 21st century impressionism, is one of the finest composers in Canada today." In addition, in 2019 presenters in Vancouver, Calgary, and Cork, Ireland have devoted entire concerts to her solo, vocal, and chamber music compositions. As well, in 2019, her work *Take The Dog Sled* for two Inuit throat singers and ensemble, received its

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European premiere in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Upcoming premieres include a new piano trio for Land's End Ensemble (2019) and a percussion concerto commissioned by the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra (2020).

Among her many awards and distinctions, she has twice won the JUNO Award for Best Classical Composition. In 2002, Louie received an honorary doctorate from the University of Calgary. She has received the National Arts Centre Composers Award, Jules Léger Prize (chamber music), Chalmer's Award (musical composition), and the Lou Applebaum Award for Excellence in Film Music Composition. In 2002, she was named an Officer of the Order of Canada. She is the recipient of the 2019 Arts & Letters Club Award. At tonight's concert, Louie will receive the prestigious 2019 Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize. The award celebrates outstanding achievement across all the artistic disciplines. Alexina Louie's complete catalogue can be found at alexinalouie.ca.

Biography courtesy of the composer

HANS ABRAHAMSEN

b. 1952

In a creative life of almost half a century, Hans Abrahamsen has more than once had the courage to stop, and the equal courage to start again – freshly, out of a clear reconsideration of where he was before. His allegiances are shown by the roll of composers whose works he has, as a master orchestrator, reconceived: Bach and Ligeti, Nielsen and Schumann, Schoenberg and Debussy. But he has long discovered his own terrain – quite often a snowscape, as in his early masterpiece *Winternacht* or the work in which he found his fully mature style, *Schnee* (2006-8), generally acknowledged as one of the rare classics of the twenty-first century.

Besides these two pieces for instrumental ensemble, his output includes four string quartets, a collection of ten piano studies (some of which he has recomposed in other forms), concertos for piano, for piano and violin, and for piano left hand, and a monodrama for soprano and orchestra, *let me tell you*. He is currently at work on his first opera, after Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*.

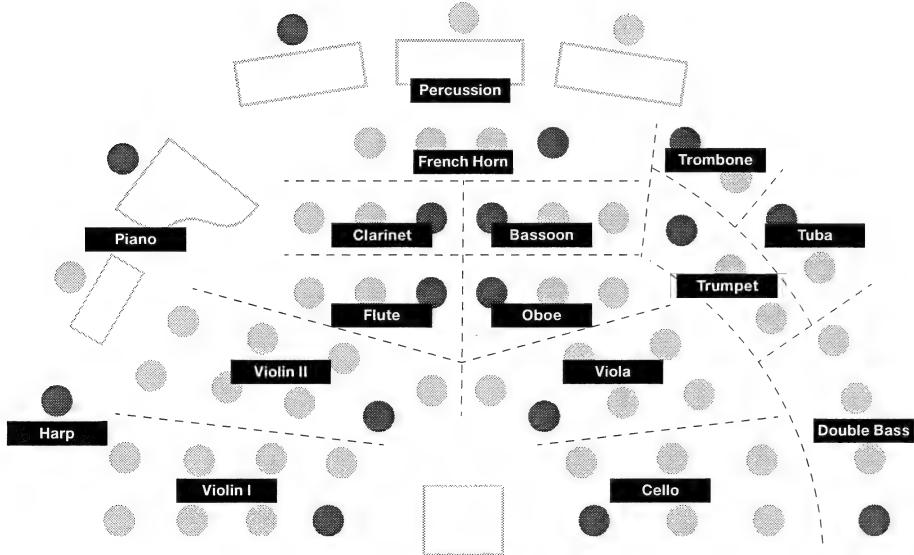
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UPCOMING CONCERTS & EVENTS

Sustain

Sunday December 1, 2019

8pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat | Koerner Hall

Andrew Norman *Sustain*

Adam Scime *Afterglow*

José Evangelista *Accelerando*

Guest Artist

Véronique Mathieu, violin



Electric & Eclectic

Wednesday February 26, 2020

8pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat | Koerner Hall

John Adams *Son of Chamber Symphony*

James O'Callaghan *Not non-other*

Alfred Schnittke *Concerto Grosso No. 1*

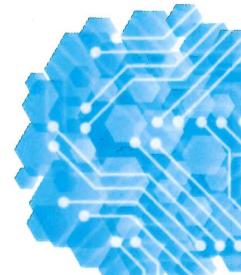
Guest Artists

Marie Bérard, violin

Stephen Sitarski, violin

Stephen Clarke, harpsichord/prepared piano

James O'Callaghan, electronics



Taiko Returns

Sunday March 22, 2020

8pm Concert | 7:15pm Pre-Concert Chat | Koerner Hall

Barbara Croall *Mijidwewinan (Messages)*

Christopher Goddard *Piano Concerto*

Eugene Astapov *A Still Life*

Maki Ishii *Mono-Prism*

Guest Artists

Shannon Mercer, soprano

Nagata Shachu, taiko drumming group

Eugene Astapov, conductor

Christopher Goddard, piano

Barbara Croall, Anishinaabekwe Performer



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THE ELMER ISELER SINGERS

Lydia Adams, Artistic Director and Conductor

Lydia Adams

Artistic Director and Conductor

Soprano

Anne Bornath
Amy Dodington
Gisele Kulak
Claire Renouf
Cathy Robinson
Emily Taub

A native of Glace Bay, N.S., Lydia Adams received her musical education at Mount Allison University, New Brunswick, and at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio in London, England. She has conducted choral works of major Canadian composers including Harry Somers, Harry Freedman, Louis Applebaum, Ruth Watson Henderson, Christos Hatzis, Alex Pauk, and Eleanor Daley, among others.

Alto

Karen Freedman
Claudia Lemcke
Lynn McMurray
Alison Roy

An innovative programmer, Dr. Adams has included over 55 new commissions in the past 17 years. Her own compositions are performed worldwide. Dr. Adams has toured extensively and guest conducted throughout Canada and the United States, and in 2009 she conducted a tour of the world's first Cree opera, *Pimooteewin: The Journey*, by Tomson Highway and Melissa Hui. 2013 Artist Winner of the Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and 2012 Winner of the Roy Thomson Hall Award of Recognition, she is also an ambassador of the Canadian Music Centre and hailed by the CMC as "the new leading exponent of the Canadian choral composer." In 2018, she received the honorary degree, Doctor of Letters, honoris causa, from Cape Breton University for her dedication "to the preservation and evolution of musical culture."

Tenor

Charles Davidson
Ben Keast
Eric MacKeracher
Mitchell Pady
Will Reid
Michael Sawarna

Baritone/Bass

Nelson Lohnes
Doug MacNaughton
Graham Robinson
Michael Thomas
Paul Winkelmanns

Victor Cheng –
James T. Chestnutt
Scholar

Lydia Adams is Artistic Director of the Elmer Iseler Singers, a national leader in commissioning, premièring, performing and recording Canadian choral works. Past conductor of the Amadeus Choir, several Canadian Provincial Youth Choirs, the National Youth Choir of Canada, and a guest conductor with ACDA Honor Choirs in Michigan and Colorado, in 2012 she was the guest conductor at Tasmania's Festival of Voices. Dr. Adams possesses extraordinary musicianship and a true passion for the choral art form. Her expertise, unique approach and dedication make her a vibrant and inspiring musical force.